

## Foundation for Contemporary Arts

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### **FOUNDATION FOR CONTEMPORARY ARTS ANNOUNCES THE ESTABLISHMENT OF THE ANNUAL HELEN FRANKENTHALER AWARD FOR PAINTING**

#### **INAUGURAL AWARD TO BE MADE TO KERSTIN BRÄTSCH**

**New York, NY, January 6, 2020** – Foundation for Contemporary Arts (FCA) is pleased to announce the creation of The Helen Frankenthaler Award for Painting, a new \$40,000 award in memory of the artist Helen Frankenthaler, one of FCA’s early supporters. Presented to an individual artist demonstrating Frankenthaler’s passion for innovation and experimentation in the medium, this annual grant is underwritten by the Helen Frankenthaler Foundation, and administered through FCA’s distinguished Grants to Artists program. The inaugural Helen Frankenthaler Award for Painting will be made to New York-based artist Kerstin Brätsch.

Helen Frankenthaler (1928-2011) is celebrated as one of the foremost abstract painters of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, with a daring and inventive creative practice that played a pivotal role in the transition from Abstract Expressionism to Color Field Painting. Known for her signature “soak stain” technique, the artist helped expand the possibilities of painting. Frankenthaler once said, “Anything is possible. It is all about risks, deliberate risks.” Her experimentation in painting—as well as in other mediums including printmaking, ceramics, and sculpture—continued throughout her prolific six-decade-long career.

“Helen Frankenthaler was an early supporter of the Foundation for Contemporary Arts, contributing *The Face of the Landscape* [acrylic on paper, 1965] to our 1965 benefit exhibition,” said Cecily Brown, a Director of the Foundation for Contemporary Arts. “This meaningful award manifests FCA’s founding mission—by artists, for artists. We are honored to partner with the Helen Frankenthaler Foundation to celebrate Frankenthaler’s ground-breaking work through this eponymous award, which will recognize artists like her, whose practices push boundaries in the medium of painting. The inaugural recipient of

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The Helen Frankenthaler Award for Painting, Kerstin Brätsch, evokes Frankenthaler's pioneering spirit in her own practice."

"Helen would like nothing better than to see us supporting artists who carry on her pioneering approach to art making—and her adventurous spirit. FCA gives us the perfect opportunity to support new generations of visual artists," said Clifford Ross, Chair of the Helen Frankenthaler Foundation's Board of Trustees.

Added Elizabeth Smith, Executive Director of the Helen Frankenthaler Foundation, "We're thrilled the inaugural Helen Frankenthaler Award for Painting will support an artist like Kerstin Brätsch, who continues to advance the practice of painting."

The Helen Frankenthaler Award for Painting will be made annually through FCA's signature Grants to Artists program. Established in 1993, Grants to Artists provides significant, unrestricted assistance to individual artists in all disciplines through a confidential, two-part nomination and selection process. Once a year, a group of artists and arts professionals are invited to serve as nominators. A separate selection panel reviews nominations and chooses grantees on the merit of their work and the effect such recognition and support might have at that point in their careers.

Born in Hamburg but based in New York for over a decade, Brätsch's practice oscillates between a conceptual analysis of the medium and a devotion to painterly processes. Through collaborative projects and the use of artisanal practices (stained glass, paper marbling, Stucco Marmo), she challenges the definitions of painting and authorship. As her anonymous nominator wrote: "Brätsch's rigorous artistic practice distinguishes her among her peers. Through her paintings, she has contributed to an expanded definition of the work of art; as well as to the vitality of collaborations in the field of contemporary art."

"It is a tremendous honor to receive an award in the name of Helen Frankenthaler, whom I consider to be an important role model for a younger female painter," stated Brätsch. "She was a true visionary, a radical inventor and fearless experimenter, a hugely influential painter to the generations that followed...My own attitude to art-making at large, and in particular the role of experimentation in my practice, is profoundly indebted to Helen Frankenthaler."

The recipient was selected by the Directors of the Foundation for Contemporary Arts: Cecily Brown, Anne Collier, Anthony B. Creamer III, Anne Dias, Jasper Johns, Jennie C. Jones, Julian Lethbridge, Dean Moss, Emily Wei Rales, and James Welling. The Directors were joined in this year's grant selection process by the following panelists: art historian and author Bettina Funcke; musician Jenny Lin; Curator at The Kitchen Matthew Lyons; and playwright, director, and New York City Players Artistic Director Richard Maxwell. Advising the selection committee on the Poetry category were poet and writer David Henderson and poet Ann Lauterbach.

### **About the Helen Frankenthaler Foundation**

The Helen Frankenthaler Foundation was established and endowed by the artist during her lifetime and became active in 2013, on the closing of the artist's estate. The Foundation supports the artist's legacy through a variety of initiatives, including encouraging and facilitating significant exhibitions of

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Frankenthaler's work, grant-making, and the publishing of a catalogue raisonné. Its holdings include an extensive selection of Frankenthaler's work in a variety of mediums, her collection of works by other artists, and original papers and materials pertaining to her life and work.

### **About Kerstin Brätsch**

Kerstin Brätsch was born in 1976 in Hamburg, Germany, and lives and works in New York. She is a painter, working autonomously and in collaboration with others, and her practice incorporates installation, sculpture and performance. Brätsch received MFAs from Columbia University and Berlin University of the Arts. In 2007 she founded DAS INSTITUT with Adele Röder, and since 2010 she has been working with Debo Ellers under the moniker KAYA. Recent solo projects include *Fossil Psychics for Christa*, The Museum of Modern Art, Terrace Café, New York, NY (2019) and *Kerstin Brätsch\_Ruine / KAYA (Kerstin Bratsch & Debo Eilers) \_KOVO*, Fondazione MEMMO, Rome, Italy (201

### **About the Foundation for Contemporary Arts (FCA)**

Foundation for Contemporary Arts was established in 1963 by John Cage (1912–1992) and Jasper Johns. By the early 1960s, some emerging visual artists were beginning to experience modest financial success while many of their peers working in dance, music, and theater struggled against severely limited funding options to present their work. Cage, Johns, and a few friends decided to organize a benefit exhibition to support their colleagues in the performance arts. Lee Bontecou, Elaine de Kooning, Willem de Kooning, Marcel Duchamp, Alex Katz, Ellsworth Kelly, Roy Lichtenstein, Marisol, Robert Morris, Barnett Newman, Claes Oldenburg, Robert Rauschenberg, James Rosenquist, Frank Stella, Elaine Sturtevant, and Andy Warhol were among the sixty-seven artists who contributed to this landmark show at the Allan Stone Gallery, a prominent contemporary gallery of the period. With proceeds from the exhibition, FCA began making grants to individual artists.

FCA depends on the generosity of artists to fund its programs and remains the only institution of its kind, created by artists to benefit artists. Its mission is to encourage, sponsor, and promote innovative work in the arts created and presented by individuals, groups, and organizations. FCA supports pioneering work in dance, music/sound, performance art/theater, poetry, and the visual arts through two core grant-making programs. Established in 1993, Grants to Artists are unrestricted, by-nomination grants that provide recipients with the financial means to engage in any artistic endeavors they wish to pursue. Each year, artists and arts professionals invited by FCA propose one artist, collective, or performing group whom they believe would benefit from an award. These confidential submissions are then reviewed by an advisory panel of artists, arts professionals, and FCA's Board of Directors and the recipients are determined. FCA also assists artists who are in need of urgent work-related funding through Emergency Grants; requests are reviewed monthly by a volunteer panel of established artists that typically awards grants of between \$500 and \$2,500. Since 1963, more than 3,000 grants awarded to artists and arts organizations—totaling over \$15.5 million—have provided opportunities for creative exploration and development. To date, over 1,000 artists have contributed paintings, sculptures, drawings, prints, photographs, performances, and videos to help fund these programs.

[www.foundationforcontemporaryarts.org](http://www.foundationforcontemporaryarts.org)

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